872 Girls and boys are usually taught together; nevertheless there are also special girls' schools, but in these as well, the teaching is done by a mullah. Elementary education begins, as with us, at the age of from five to six years, as a rule, and for the boys usually lasts seven years. Many parents take their boys out of school before this, however, if they can use them in their business or for labor. The whole course is com-
[562] pleted usually only by those who wish to enter a medrese later. For girls school attendance usually ends when they are eight or nine years old, for they are already of marriageable age when they are ten, and must receive instruction before that time in needlework, embroidery, weaving and other domestic tasks.

The instruction is strenuous for teachers and pupils alike, for it lasts nine hours a day, from six o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon, with only a little free time for recreation and for eating the /220/ modest meals of bread and fruit, which the children have brought with them in their school bags. The pupils have only one day a week free, that is, Friday. Otherwise they have little vacation, only a week each at the time of the three high Moslem festivals.

872 The instruction in the elementary schools of Turkestan is limited
876 primarily to the teaching of reading and writing. There are no courses, as we know them. The pupils are first taught the alphabet, and then they begin to read and copy from selected parts of the Koran, from which they proceed to the reading of various other books. The study of one book is held to be finished when the pupil is able to read it and copy from it without difficulty. Whoever has completed a half dozen books in this manner has finished the course and can proceed to study in a high school if he feels in himself the desire and capacity to do so. In addition to reading and writing the children in the elementary schools also learn the most important prayers and precepts of the Koran and the complicated ceremonies which must be observed during the prayers and the ablutions prescribed by the Koran. The methods of instruction used by the teachers in the elementary schools in Turkestan are characteristic and completely different from our customs and they explain why in these schools the time and work expended by the teacher and pupils corresponds so little to the results obtained. The instruction is already made very difficult by the fact that pupils at all levels must be taught at the same time by one and the same teacher; it is further encroached upon, quite needlessly, in that the various pupils at a given time are not occupied with one subject, such as reading or writing, but each is

876 doing something different. One would think it quite impossible for the
872 teacher to attend to each one. While one is copying his alphabet, another the Koran, a third some other book, a fourth is spelling out the alphabet, a fifth the Koran, a sixth some other author, etc. Since all read at the same time and as loudly as possible, and each reads something different, there results such a confusion and such an infernal racket that one becomes unpleasantly aware of such schools even some distance away, and anyone who is near a school is quite stunned. The teacher sits in the midst of this noisy throng, on the floor, like his pupils, armed with a long switch with which he can reach from his position all the way to those seated on the outermost fringes, and call to order immediately those who do not demonstrate the necessary zeal. As a result the pupils strain their lungs to the utmost and yell until they are as red in the face as lobsters, so that the veins swell out on their foreheads and /221/ their eyes are popping out of their heads; each tries to shout louder than his neighbor in order to earn the favor of the teacher.

/Figure 78, p. 57a. Caption: The Medrese of Rustem Beg in Ura-Tyube./

The pupils squat while they read and write, with their legs crossed and their bodies bent forward, on the floor, which is /222/ covered with a felt carpet or a simple reed mat. During their reading and copying they place their books in front of them on the floor--a good protective device against shortsightedness. Instead of our slates for writing, they use small spade-shaped wooden boards, which they hold firmly by the handle in the left hand, while with the right they draw their attempts at caligraphy with a pointed reed and ordinary ink. When they write on paper, they hold the sheet on the palm of their left hand, and here also a pointed reed and ink are employed. The natives of Turkestan write only on one side of the paper, which has already been covered with a special gloss, while the other side has been left rough.

The discipline which the elementary school pupils receive from their teachers is very strict, and in spite of their small size they are punished with the rod. There exists a characteristic procedure which is rather questionable from the pedagogical point of view in which each of the pupils who informs against another for some offense, receives as a reward for his denunciation, the right to give the offender the first blow of the rod of the punishment which results from his informing.

872 The elementary schools just described can, by their nature deal only with a limited number of pupils, from twenty to thirty approximate-

astronomy, physics, medicine, chemistry, geography, etc., are absolutely ignored. The supreme principle is still that axiom imputed to the Caliph Omar, that the content of all more recent books is either in the Koran already, and therefore superfluous, or else it is not in the Koran, and is consequently heretical. 874

The period of study at the medrese varies greatly, according to the abilities of the individual students and the greater or lesser degree of learning which each wishes to attain, and amounts to from fifteen to thirty years. Usually a student remains in the medresse until he is appointed as professor, judge, imam and the like, and in case he loses his position he returns there once more.

The teaching methods of the medrese professors have much in common with the methods adopted by many of our philologists who analyze the ancient classics. They discuss the works they are going through with their students both as to language and substance with a a thoroughness in no way inferior to the hair-splitting of such philologists, so that they often take a whole year to expound a single work. If such a pedant succeeds in interpreting a completely meaningless passage in the Koran in a new way, a passage which has been expounded before in a hundred different ways, then he is a made man, and he will be admired by his students and colleagues just as much as we would admire the discoverer of the law of gravitation or of the cholera bacillus, etc. Students and scholars in such a case come from great distances to gaze in astonishment at such a light of the church, and whenever possible, to take instruction from him. At most, one can only deplore the fact that so much time and labor and so much sincere effort is employed with so little profit upon the eternal repetition of deeds of eras and generations long past, through which mankind and science have not been advanced one single step. 876

Among all the scholarly schools of Central Asia the medreses of the town of Bukhara enjoy the greatest esteem, and the most celebrated leaders of Moslem scholarship are numbered among their teachers. 873

In addition to the medreses, which have in view the general education and training of scholars, there are in Tashkent and also in other towns of Turkestan various other special schools, which are established for specific purposes; thus there is the Karikh Khana medrese, in which the students are solely engaged in memorizing the Koran; the Salivat Khana medrese, where only prayers are taught; the Masnavi Khana medrese, in which the works of the writer Masnavi are studied, and the like.